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Martlet

PRIDE 2001

JULY 19 / 2001 [54.03]

EDITORIAL: Pride? 2001

How many people do you have to exclude
To make them approve of you?
In a struggle to please the state
You divide our community with fear and hate

Some queers wear fewer clothes than you
Some have kinkier sex lives too
But that's all right, that's okay
There's more than one way to be gay

It's ironic, it's moronic
We exclude each other for acceptance from another
This is about diversity
Don't divide our community

the Victoria Radical Cheerleaders, performed at Pride 2001

On Sunday, July 8 thousands of queers, their allies and curious onlookers took to the streets for the annual Victoria Pride parade. The colourful mass wound its way from Centennial Square to Fisherman's Wharf Park in James Bay where the scene had been set for an afternoon of fun and entertainment. The sun shone, the barbeques sizzled and the water just off fisherman's wharf glistened in the background.

It was really a perfect setting for people to relax, be comfortable and to proudly celebrate the diversity of the queer community in Victoria. Or was it? I thought so. I thought so until I witnessed one of the marshals in her orange and yellow vest of authority ask a topless woman to put on her shirt. When the woman protested and asked why, she was told that Pride 2001 is a "family friendly event."

Since when, I asked myself, have breasts not been family friendly? Arguably breasts are of great importance to the family as they feed many family members in their infancy. And breasts are part of women's bodies. And women's bodies, and all bodies, are sacred. Isn't this a family value? Don't we want to teach our children that they are free to be in their bodies in any way they feel comfortable? Don't we want to remind each other of this?

"It is not children who are offended by breasts, it is their parents," said Michele Kinney, Radical Cheerleader and queer single mom. And these parents and anyone uncomfortable seeing a woman topless at a gay pride parade (or anywhere really) threaten the very foundations on which the queer community is built: diversity, openness and acceptance.

In pegging this event as family friendly and then by enforcing a shirts-on policy for women and asking certain acts in the afternoon performance line up to "tone it down," the organizers of pride compromised these values. What I wonder is how much "family friendly" was a euphemism for "media friendly" or "acceptable to the wider community."

It worries me on a day such as gay pride, when the queer community is so visible, that the integrity of our community would be compromised. We have struggled way too long and hard for visibility, for recognition, for acceptance. Perhaps people are tired, and maybe it would be easier to appear "normal" than to keep fighting to be different, queer, ourselves. But this tiredness (or apathy?) is dangerous and certainly not anything to be proud of.

There is more than one way to be gay. There are as many ways to be gay as there are gay people. All pride events should reflect and celebrate this diversity. If they don't, as this years' clearly didn't, then we really are doomed, and the sad thing is, we will have doomed ourselves.

photo by Linzy Nelson

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Eagle Feather sales manager Virgi Sampson photo by Graham Winterbottom

Eagle Feather offers local artists a gallery

by Miranda Post

First Nation artists and art collectors now have a meeting place downtown. Unlike many other Victoria shops that sell First Nations merchandise, the Eagle Feather Gallery and Giftshop is First Nation owned and operated, allowing members of the public and Canada's first peoples to meet and exchange ideas, culture and cash.

Virgil Sampson, Eagle Feather manager, said the owners wanted to promote native artists.

"It was one of their dreams," Sampson said. "They asked me if I could help them recruit artists. I knew some offhand. We started making phone calls, passing out flyers to come to meetings. And here we are."

Gesturing around the neat, traditional-art packed gallery Sampson explained that the shop/gallery is a cooperative with 14 members. Artisans from as far as the Mohawk, Cree, Nez Perce Nations, as well as Tsaartlip band and Coast Salish nations contributed to the opening of Eagle Feather.

The co-op members will be invited to do in store work for patrons to observe while they browse the painted drums, silver earrings and swamp grass-woven crafts.

"We're expecting to get customers from all points of the earth," Sampson said. "What's unique about our gallery is that we'll have on a regular basis on-site artists doing all their crafts: carving wood, carving silver, painting, and knitting. We've already had onsite carvers from day one."

Local carver Derek Heaton came in with a rotund, person-sized bird totem he'd been working on all day. Tired and excited, Heaton dragged the totem into the shop, the smell of cedar permeating the air.

This is the kind of interaction that Sampson said will attract people to the gallery.

"We'll have artists working right in the front window where people can come and see them work, talk to them, get to know about the artist, the designs, the spiritual meanings and traditions of their territories," Sampson said.

Customers may be able to request customized, private orders for some of the carvings but for the most part, Sampson said, items like totems and masks will be created "according to the artists beliefs, customs and traditions" depending on where they are from.

To display their work, the artists pay a nominal rental fee and after that Eagle Feather asks for a small commission.

"We're open to taking more co-op members," Sampson said. "Tourists and locals love it that [Eagle Feather] is owned and run by First Nations."

Eagle Feather's official grand opening will be Thursday, August 2 and will feature Nu-Cha-Nulth, Cree and Coast Salish singers and dancers.

David Orchard on reclaiming Canada

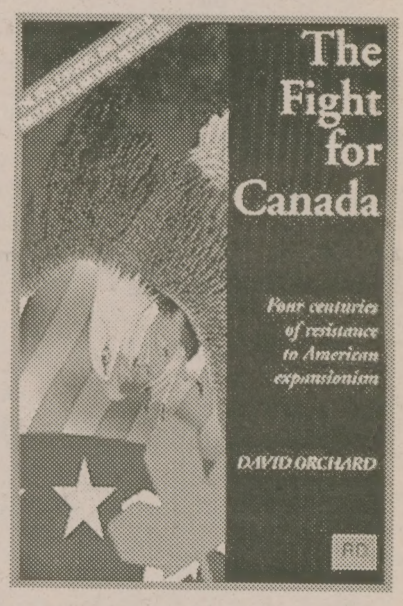
by Lorna Mace

David Orchard, organic farmer, author of *The Fight for Canada* and runner up to Joe Clark in the last federal Progressive Conservative Party leadership race, delivered a speech entitled "Globalization – what is it all about?" to a full house on June 22. He voiced his concerns on a number of issues surrounding globalization, including the FTA, NAFTA (in particular, the Chapter 11 agreements), Canada's energy supply, and the current agriculture situation. Orchard displays a refreshingly honest fear towards Canada's future, as he strongly disapproves of agreements that support globalization. He claims that Canada would be better off reinstating an economic border with the United States, "We had freer trade with the United States before we had the Free Trade Agreement."

Canada's 1989 entry into the Free Trade Agreement marked the globalization of our country. In a 1999 essay entitled, "Ten Years After," Orchard writes, "Since entering the FTA Canada has experienced the longest period of sustained high unemployment and the worst social and economic conditions since the 1930s." Unlike globalization extremists who feel that communities should be completely self-sufficient, Orchard's stance on trade is one of moderation. He makes his point by using the example of importing bananas, and exporting wheat, as those are beneficial trades to countries that have a demand for items that they cannot produce. The fault lies in the fact that three-quarters of Canada's trade is handled inside of large American corporations.

Canada is not bound to the Free Trade Agreement. Orchard proclaims, "There are no problems with the legalities of getting out." If Canada was not part of the FTA we would likely return to the General Agreements of Tariffs and Trade, or GATT. According to Orchard, the GATT was an effective method of trade, and the consequences of moving from it to the FTA were detrimental. In his reply to the *Globe and Mail* editorial of February 24, 1997, Orchard declared, "Had Canada continued growing at the rate it had in the half decade prior to the FTA the budget deficit would have disappeared three years ago without cutting expenditures. And unemployment would be under 3 per cent."

When asked what changes he would like to see in the next 10 to 20 years, Orchard began by stressing the importance of environmental protection. "We must take concrete steps on the environmental front," said Orchard, "and stop the rampant degradation of the environment." Secondly, Orchard feels that the fostering of Canadian industries should be a high priority. He believes that Canada should not be following any foreign policy. Instead of exporting raw materials, we should be creating our own industries and breaking the hold that the United States has on our economy. Orchard mentions Norway, voted "the best country to live in" by the U.N, as a model of a self-sustaining, independent nation that chose to create industries instead of participating extensively in the global economy. Orchard's vision is straightforward. He hopes that by focusing on the original goals of the Progressive Conservative Party, he and the party members can overturn the FTA policies, and in turn, "reclaim Canada for Canadians."



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Activists plan to crash regional summit in Whistler, B.C.

by John Thompson

Tourism BC isn't advising visitors going to Whistler to pack gas masks this summer but it may be a good idea.

From July 25 to 28, Whistler will host the annual meeting of the Pacific North West Economic Region (PNWER) which brings together leaders from government and business, and non-governmental organizations. Local activist groups are calling on concerned people to converge on Whistler, like they did for higher profile trade meetings in Seattle and Quebec City.

The conference is entitled "Future of The North American WEST: Three Nations, One Region" and will be Premier Gordon Campbell's first appearance on the international stage.

Several blocks away from the conference a very different meeting will be held. A tent city will be constructed by the Cascadia Region Anti-Capitalist Collective. The collective called PNWER yet another body that gives the reins of power over to rich white men, who have been exploiting and killing the people and the environment of the region since the first colonizers. In reaction to such criticism, the economic group is attempting to dissociate itself from prominent icons of globalization on their website.

"PNWER has absolutely no relation of any kind to WTO, NAFTA, GATT, or FTAA," reads a disclaimer on the site. Unlike the large trade regulating bodies, PNWER isn't responsible for creating legislation or entering trade agreements. However, the organization does develop policy-making initiatives.

Local activist Richard Brooks charges that there's something behind their evasive language.

"Such meetings create greater economic concentration in the hands of the powerful, and threaten the last remnants of democracy," said Brooks. "Governments today are adopting wholesale the suggestions of business, whose track record have shown they always operate in their own interests, and not in the interest of the public."

Matt Morrison, Executive Director of PNWER said critics have some of their facts wrong. He stresses that PNWER isn't a Regional Trade Alliance that communicates with the WTO.

"It's completely false, erroneous, totally inaccurate," he said. Morrison added PNWER doesn't communicate with the WTO because it's not a federal government.

He also said the organization is non-profit, open and democratic though he declined to release the names of delegates attending the conference saying that disclosing that information was against policy. However, anyone can attend, if they're willing to shell out $350.

Morrison said that PNWER doesn't exist to promote trade. It exists to promote the best practices for livable communities in the Northwest. He also emphasized that the conference is geared towards sustainability and eco-friendliness. He said elected leaders are very concerned about sustainability and they'd have to be creative in finding sustainable solutions.

Morrison said he's asking protesters to look carefully at his organizations' agendas and encourages them to be a part of the conference.

But there are some activists traveling to Whistler with the goal of shutting the conference down. Direct actions are planned on Thursday morning, July 25, when Premier Campbell opens the meeting. Protests will continue afterward, building toward a large demonstration on Saturday.

The economic organization includes the areas of Alaska, the Yukon, B.C., Alberta, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. Topics at the conference range from resources such as water, forestry, energy, mining and agriculture, to services like transportation, health care, and education.

PEERS offers community housing

by Brenda Martin

The Prostitute, Empowerment, Education and Resource Society (PEERS) now offers safe and affordable long-term housing for women wanting to exit the sex trade in Victoria.

"Since the beginning of PEERS people have wanted to access our programs but couldn't because they were living in crisis," board member Jannit Rabinovitch said.

The society has a variety of programs including RISE, a program that can be used to exit which builds self-esteem, self-awareness, cultural interest, resume skills and Second Chance, a program that works at training people exiting the sex trade for the tourism industry. The society also runs an outreach program on the street to support people who are currently working in the sex trade.

"PEERS tries to offer as healthy and safe a place as possible and if they want to exit we try to give them something to exit to," said Ally R. a PEERS worker.

"[Second Stage housing] is a really important step for people who want to leave the sex trade," Rabinovitch said. "It is unrealistic to expect women to leave when living in an emergency situation."

The housing is different from transition housing which is more of a group home situation because the women are responsible for paying their bills and buying their groceries and live in two-bedroom apartments.

To be offered a one year residency, a woman must be in, exiting or exited the sex trade, homeless and willing to attend counselling, said Candice MacDonald, project manager of the Second Stage housing.

Originally women came directly from the street and all had some sort of addiction, said MacDonald.

But MacDonald explained that people who are active in their addiction need to make a move to be clean.

"They have to have some desire," she said. "So we are now requiring women go to detox and we'll hold their space for them."

MacDonald interviews perspective tenants, counsels the women living in the housing, trains and hires staff and deals with other agencies.

The housing is located in the Fernwood area, near downtown Victoria and has been open for almost two months. The society received funding from many sources for this housing project. Both HRDC Supporting Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI) and the Real-Estate Foundation of B.C. contributed around $100,000.

Also the B.C. government is contributing an annual $15,000 towards paying the difference if women cannot pay their rent in full.

"This will ensure that folks can stay there if they don't have the full rent," said Sheila Orr, Liberal MLA for Victoria-Hillside riding. Orr has been involved with PEERS for four years.

"Considering all the women in here and all the personalities things are running smoothly," said Debi Taylor, who works at the house. She said they still have things to work out – like laundry. When the housing opened laundry cost a dollar to wash and a dollar to dry. This did not work out because it still cost too much for the women who are adjusting to living on a budget dictated by a welfare income. Most of these women have never been on welfare before, said Taylor. Now the washer and dryer are free.

Another plan in the works is a five dollar pool between all the women so the staff can plan a monthly outing for the building. "It took me a long time to find out that I could have fun doing other things [than using drugs]," said Taylor. "Leaving the sex trade can be very isolating. "People use dope to stop the hurt. [When they quit] people can affect them and they can't hide behind the dope. They have to learn to deal with these [new] feelings and it's hard."

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Victoria's dirty secret:

The connection between the pavement and the ocean

by Nicole Martin and Christopher Schuetze

What do the municipalities that make up the capital region, and its governing body the CRD (Capital Regional District) do with wastewater? Like most Victorians we had a vague idea that it isn't very much.

Our wastewater comes in two forms. The more infamous one is sewage, the other more innocuous, yet still quite ecologically dangerous is stormdrain water.

As the name implies, cities initially installed storm water drains to deal with an abundance of water after rainstorms. However, the substances in modern day stormdrain's liquids are far more harmful to the environment then mere water. Few would be surprised that road pollution (that is things cars spit out), industrial pollution as well as residential pollution (that is things like paints washed out of brushes, soaps used to clean the car or boat on a Sunday afternoon and pesticides used in Victoria's beautiful gardens) contribute Arsenic, Cadmium, Chromium, Copper, Lead, Mercury, Silver, Zinc and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) to the brew that is called urban runoff. All these things end up, untreated, in the ocean. Stormdrain discharges can be seen lining the beautiful shores of our city, spewing out pollutants just metres away from where one might be tempted to take a refreshing swim.

Besides all these pollutants, one might find another substance flowing out of these storm water discharges, a substance that most would be surprised by (we were). Human sewage makes its way into the stormdrain system either because of a phenomenon known as crossing over (hapless plumbers mistaking the outflow pipes for sewage pipes and hooking up residential sewage lines accordingly) or because leaking sewage pipes allow the substance to seep along the rock to the next stormdrain opening (such leakage is of course exasperated by earthquakes). When beaches were closed due to high fecal coliform count (an indicator bacteria marking the presence of disease causing intestinal microbes) in the late 80s (the last one, Ross Bay, was reopened in 1992), it was due to the storm water outfalls (even though a telephone poll commissioned by the CRD indicated that the majority of Victorians believed the closures were caused by the sewage outfalls). The thing to remember about stormdrain wastewater (although it is not as impressively disgusting as its big brother the sewage wastewater) is that everything that hits the pavement will end up without any treatment on our beaches and marine ecosystems.

> Everything that passes through a sink or a toilet, or touches the streets, finds its way to the marine environment via the wastewater systems. This includes the chemicals from urinal pucks and the antiseptics from all the new super germ remover soaps... the list is endless.

The sewer system in Victoria does not involve any form of treatment, save for a 6mm screen to filter out solids. The waste is discharged directly into the Juan de Fuca Strait. Two major outfalls serve the sewage disposal needs of Victoria, located at Clover and Macaulay Points. These outfalls run approximately 2km into the Strait at a depth of 70 metres. Together they emit 3.4 million gallons of sewage into the marine waters a day.

An attempt to determine the ecological affects of this practice has proven to be difficult. Little research has been completed by involved agencies to assess the long term affects of the sewage and other contaminants on the marine ecosystem. Our research uncovered only one relevant study completed by the CRD.

This study discovered that there is a 400m radius surrounding Macaulay Point which is significantly affected by contaminants from the outfalls. This area is considered by the CRD as "localized" and not worthy of protection. However this 400 metre radius actually incorporates an area of over 500,000 square metres and small sessile organisms may move an average of a couple of meters over their lifetime making this a significant area. Pollutants that are having an adverse affect on these organisms are then passed onto anything that consumes them. There is potential for the damage done in this small "localized" area to be felt on a much wider scale.

Although, it seems by far the most disgusting, the actual sewage is only partially of concern to a marine ecologist (and to all of us). The other part of the problem is the wide range of chemical contaminants that get passed through the sewer system, and for that matter, the storm water drains. Essentially everything that passes through a sink or a toilet, or touches the streets, finds its way to the marine environment via the wastewater systems. This includes such things as the chemicals from urinal pucks, the antiseptics from all the new super germ remover soaps, mercury from dentists and doctor's offices (which is what is thought to be the causing agent for the poisoned marine life mentioned previously), oil spills from cars... the list is endless.

The pollution entering the marine system via the storm water drains enters the highly diverse inter-tidal zones. However, the tests completed by the CRD to monitor the contaminants from the stormdrains are few and far between. Salinity, pH, oxygen levels and temperature levels are all relatively easy measurements that can be used to indicate the ability of an aquatic environment to host life. None of these measurements are completed by the CRD at the storm water drains.

The basic problem is the lack of knowledge and therefore concern. The way the system functions now, all wastewater is taken care of in a quiet and cheap way. People are not concerned because they don't know what to be concerned about. In 1992, 57 per cent of Victorians voted to keep the sewage outfall systems as they were (this is the same number of Victorians that thought that beach closures were due to these sewer lines – a very odd coincidence indeed). We can only hope that this majority did not really understand how much 3.4 million gallons of untreated sewage are, what pollutants are in the sewage, and how fragile a marine ecosystem is.

Governments, both federal and provincial have ordered Victoria to have a sewage treatment plant operating in the near-ish (between 2010 and 2015) future. The problem is that the deadline seems to be very flexible and the CRD seems to be content doing nothing (the ballot for a new vote has one option which sees Victoria holding out on building a treatment facility for as long as possible). In any case, the building of a sewage treatment plant would not solve any of our storm water outflow pollution problems. The best, and probably the only way to stem pollution by the stormdrain outfalls, is to raise public awareness.

We all must be actively aware that there is a very real connection between the pavement and the ocean (and think about it next time an oil change gets a little messy). The environmental behaviour we Victorians are currently engaged in is caused by the same outdated thinking that is responsible for much environmental damage. We assumed we could do anything to nature except in cases for which we had direct evidence to the contrary, although it is clear that we must assume that all our interactions with nature are harmful, and therefore must be understood and minimized before they are implemented.

LATERAL DRIFT
YOU KNOW, JOANNA, WE'RE ALL PART OF THIS DYNAMIC PROCESS, YET WE'RE NOT REALLY MOVING FORWARD AT ALL — IT'S VERY DECEIVING...
FORWARD MOTION IS HERALDED BY INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AS THE ONE AND ONLY MEANS TO SO-CALLED HAPPINESS: THE COMFORT OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY
GETTING AHEAD, MOVING UP, FAST-TRACK, HIGH-GEAR, UPWARDLY MOBILE... OUR LANGUAGE IS SATURATED WITH "FORWARD-MOTION-EQUALS-SUCCESS" METAPHORS
THE MEDIA BOMBARDS US WITH FAST CARS AND MULTI-SPEED FOOD PROCESSORS...
...AND THE SCARY THING IS, MOST OF US BUY INTO IT, AND MEASURE OUR HAPPINESS IN MILES, HOURS, KILOJOULES, DOLLARS, POUNDS, INCHES, BYTES, GIGA-WATTS MILLI- SECO
THAT'S THE GREAT THING ABOUT DANCE - MOTION BECOMES PURELY ESTHETIC, AND IS NO LONGER JUST THE MEANS TO AN END... IT'S ALMOST SUBVERSIVE, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT - SWIVELLING HIPS COULD THWART THE ENTIRE SYSTEM!
JR '00

photos by Graham Winterbottom

Ainu carvers, indigenous people of the Kurile Islands of Japan, work on a canoe at Royal Roads University.

Journey to join with the past, with each other

by Brad Buie

Up above the shingle at Esquimalt Lagoon the wind rips over a blue tarpaulin shelter and stirs up red cedar sawdust. Under the shelter on its side lies the long narrow solid shape of a canoe. It is finished smooth on the sides and is roughly hewn in the hollow waiting to be further dug out. Cleanly piled are the wood slabs and chips that have been sculpted off the tree as it makes its journey into a canoe.

The carvers are Ainu, indigenous people of the Kurile Islands of Japan. For 10,000 years their culture evolved and they became efficient hunters and gatherers. They traveled by canoe and traded between the many Japanese islands. Two hundred years ago, with the rise of Japanese merchants, their trade diminished. Eventually no more canoes were carved and the knowledge and skills of canoe making were not passed on, but forgotten between generations.

Only in 1989 did Tokuhei Akibe, looking at archival documents, bring his ancestral history to life through carving a traditional canoe. He is considered a master carver, having carved eight more canoes since then, and now has Ainu apprentices who are learning his art.

Akibe and his apprentices have been invited this year to join with other First Nations peoples in the Tribal Journeys. This gathering is to honour different First Nations cultures and to create a legacy for indigenous communities. In the six weeks the Ainu are here, they will take part in sharing different carving techniques, canoe styles, arts and song and dance. But at the centre of these activities is the project to fashion a canoe and have it ready for traveling the sea. The Ainu canoe and 75 other canoes from territories over the Pacific West Coast will all journey to the Squamish Nation on the mainland July 28 to participate in the Canoe Gathering Festival.

...

Until they are ready to launch, the 12 Ainu guests are housed at Royal Roads, which is historically land of the Coast Salish people. Down near the waterfront they work on their project. The metamorphosis from log into canoe is a meticulous process approached with sacred care to ensure that neither people nor tree, are injured. The tree is a donation from Interfor and is an old growth Red Cedar from the northern tip of Vancouver Island. The wood is soft, of more buttery matter, compared to the hardwood of Japan the Ainu are used to. When finished, the canoe will be unlike anything the First Nations of this coast have constructed. It will be 45 feet in length, have planks bound to its sides and a rectangular sail.

The Ainu canoe will be unlike anything the First Nations of this coast have constructed. It will be 45 feet in length, have planks bound to its sides and a rectangular sail.

Although the work is hard, there is also time for play. On Thursday, July 12, the carvers stopped for the day to enjoy a cultural celebration and a welcoming from representatives of the Esquimalt, Songhees and Saanich Nations. On the Quarterdeck in the Grant Building, all parties gathered in a semicircle around a podium to witness the various honours. The chiefs of the First Nations dressed casually, jeans and t-shirts, cell phones on the hip, appearing quite "Canadian" or at least as though they are living as modernly as the next person. The idea of preserving traditional cultures seemed to me, for a moment, so distant from the realities of their existence. Looking at the Ainu who were dressed in their traditional clothing, I thought that in their everyday lives they too would wear jeans and t-shirts.

Not until the Coast Salish people spoke and I heard in the steadiness and weight of their words the depth of pride they felt in their identity were my prejudices dispelled. They don't simply take pride in a past identity and its traditions but also in the tension of their present identity, defined as survival through oppression and a return to those past traditions that found them as independent peoples.

Sam Samuel, an elder of the First Nations, walking with a cane up to the podium, spoke with an easy eloquence: "Friendship grows." He was silent for a moment to let his words take effect. He emphasized that "to love is to empower." He said "the word Ainu means human" and that this was appropriate to keep in mind when two separate cultures come together and realize that "they are both part of the biggest group, that of human beings."

These words set the tone for the celebration. The Ainu and the First Nations each gave thanks to each other and honoured each other in their different ways, yet they showed remarkable similarities in the reverence with which they performed their ceremonies. The First Nations sang to a drumbeat. A single male voice, low and drawn out, rose and fell with the steady drumming in the background. In turn, the Ainu did their own songs. They danced a Sword Dance, which is a prayer to the divine ones after a natural disaster or if one is lost at sea. Two men faced each other, each clapping the hilt of his sword in his sheath, then thrusting his sword out at the air. They pivoted towards each other and their swords met in a small clash. "The dance," said Akibe (through a translator), "would normally continue for hours."

When the ceremonies ended, the audience shuffled outdoors or mingled at the various exhibits of necklaces and carvings of Ainu art. I spoke with Barry Samuel, a younger generation carver who talked of the time he spent with the Ainu. "I was very honoured by witnessing their canoe carving methods. I made sure to be very respectful, to observe their protocol, and not to interfere with them unless I was asked." Samuel's own carving apprenticeship began when he was only five-years-old. "I would sit in the canoe when my father was working on it and just watch." His father is 75 now and he also learned from his father at the age of five. "Now my nephews sit and watch me." Samuel thinks the revival of traditional ways are strengthening for the First Nations people and the other indigenous peoples like the Ainu, "I can see, in five or 10 years, 200 to 300 canoes gathered and together crossing the waters."

VIPIRG

Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group
Refund Period

What is VIPIRG?
VIPIRG is a student run research and action group working on social justice and environmental issues. We also run an alternative resource library in SUB B122, and run Amaranth, a food-ordering group.
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Local Falun Dafa practitioners continue the fight for human rights in China

by Kevin Groves

Sunlight glints off the treetops in Beacon Hill Park near the petting zoo where the smells of sheep and peacocks mingle with the smell of engine exhaust. Cars pull into the parking lot and yellow-fleeced people climb out and one-by-one form a semicircle to do their exercises. Soft music begins playing from a stereo and a few pedestrians stop to watch as the circle begins a series of hand movements that are held for a length of time and then cued to change by a voice on the cd.

One member comes late and wordlessly joins the semicircle and integrates herself into the group. The movements are never hurried and there is a peaceful meditative quality to the action. They are the Falun Dafa Practitioners of Victoria.

Now that Toronto is licking its wounds in the aftermath of its Olympic loss to Beijing, it is almost easy to forget, amidst Canadian tears and Chinese patriotism, that Falun Dafa continues to be the target of a violent crackdown in China that has killed over 200 people and sent over 25,000 to forced labour camps, including at least one Canadian.

Almost, but not quite.

Often referred to as Falun Gong, the movement was founded in China in 1992 by Li Hongzhi and has since built up a following of 100 million people worldwide. Those involved call it a "cultivation practice," where the goal is to cultivate the mind, body and spirit by acting in accordance with the principle of "Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance." It differs from traditional Chinese Tai Chi and Qi Gong in that the five fundamental exercises are simpler and easier to learn.

Janice Banks, a Victoria bookbinder who has been practicing Falun Dafa for eight months calls Falun Dafa a higher level form of Qi Gong.

"The basis is to cultivate the heart and improve individual morality," she said. "There's nothing wrong with Qi Gong but it's really more for health and fitness, and doesn't have any higher focus than that."

Andrea Hayley, who works as a cook at Rebar, has been practicing Falun Dafa for about two years. She agrees with her colleague that it must be thought of in "a class of its own."

"Falun Dafa promotes growth of the body and mind at the same time and improves the practitioner as a person," she said. Hayley added that she was amazed when she tried Falun Dafa for the first time. "The standing exercises made me consciously endure discomfort but after 28 minutes of doing it I felt liberated. I recognize the value of that."

Practitioners describe their movement as neither religious nor political, as it does not have any political agenda or religious rituals. There is no membership or regular organization, and all classes are provided by volunteers and are free of charge.

"No one is getting rich," said Sophia Bronwen, a Vancouver adult education teacher who has been practicing for two years. "No one wants personal power, no one is interested in political party, everything is free and considered pre-destined. So, we don't want anything from anyone, other than the right to practice."

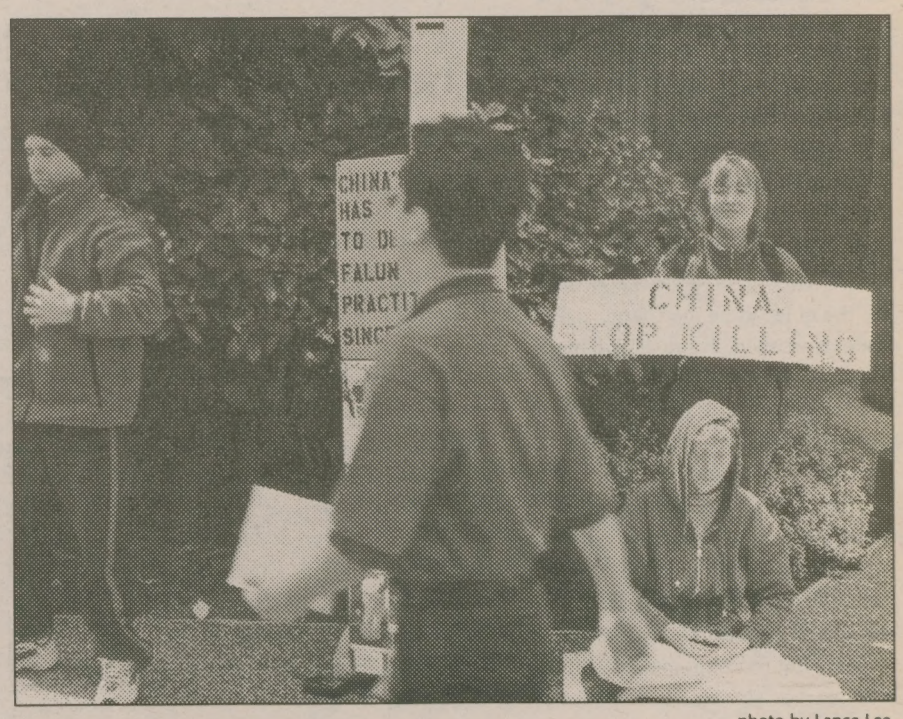


photo by Lance Lee

Sophia Bronwen [holding sign] outside of Vancouver's Chinese Embassy on June 14, campaigning for the release of Ying Zhu.

The Victoria group has existed for almost two years and conducts regular information sessions about the movement at numerous locations in Victoria, including UVic's SUB. To date, the efforts of the local group have resulted in some municipal government attention. On January 20, 2001, The city of Colwood declared an annual Falun Dafa Day, and in May, Falun Dafa weeks were declared in 9 local Victoria districts.

Practitioners interviewed feel that encouraging public awareness for their movement keeps the international spotlight trained on the human rights violations that continue to be conducted against Falun Dafa in China.

"It's evil," said Ying Li, a 35-year-old urban planner who is involved with a group of Vancouver practitioners. "All that practitioners are trying to do is

Janice Banks in one of the five Falun Dafa exercise positions.

photo by Andrea Hayley

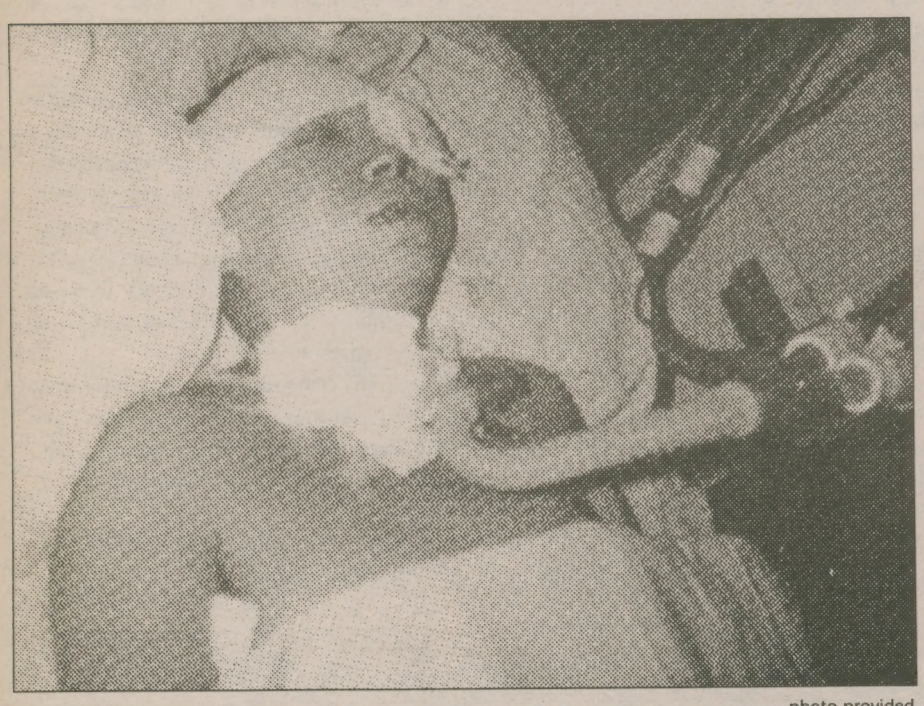


photo provided

Zhao Xin in hospital, shortly before her death.

peacefully improve their moral standard through Falun Dafa."

Chinese authorities began persecuting Falun Dafa practitioners in early 1999 when a government survey determined that the number of practitioners exceeded membership in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Labeling the movement an "evil cult" in July of 1999, Chinese President Jiang Zemin ordered the movement officially outlawed.

Li speculated that paranoia about the security of his own position within the CCP was a factor in Jiang Zemin's decision to implement a crackdown on Falun Dafa.

"With the current open door policy in China, more and more people are becoming disillusioned with communism and attracted to movements like Falun Dafa," she said. Li added that the crackdown currently conducts atrocities that are difficult to imagine in today's society, simply to consolidate Jiang Zemin's position.

In the first three months of the crackdown, 35,000 practitioners were arrested. By May 2001, over 25,000 practitioners have been sent to labour camps, and over 450 have been given prison terms of up to 18 years. Among these include Shenli Lin, husband of Canadian citizen Jinyu Li, who has been detained in a labour camp for the past 16 months.

On May 10, Concordia University student Ying Zhu was arrested for being a practitioner while visiting her family in China. On June 21, Zhu returned to Montreal after spending over a month in prison.

"It has been a nightmare," Zhu said at a Montreal press conference the day after her return to Canada. "I was kidnapped, interrogated, threatened, and mentally abused by the people from the National Security Department. Every one of my movements, temperments, expressions, and emotions were recorded and filed," she said.

On May 31, a handful of federal members of parliament from five different parties joined together to campaign for the release of Ying Zhu. "Canadian residents are naturally of particular concern to our federal government," said Vancouver NDP MP Libby Davies, who was part of the coalition. "But I'm concerned with persecution against anyone."

For Davies, the return of Ying Zhu should encourage Canadians not to ignore the many other practitioners who continue to be persecuted in China. "I'm certainly glad that Ying Zhu was released, but we can't forget that there are thousands more over there who are suffering human rights violations," she said. "We have to keep pressure on our own government, since this issue affects our own foreign policy of putting trade before everything else, something I don't agree with."

According to the Falun Dafa Information Centre, by June 26, 2001, 229 practitioners had died from inhumane treatment while in police custody in China. Among these include Zhao Xin, a lecturer at Beijing University of Industry and Commerce, who was arrested by police while doing Falun Dafa in a park on June 19, 2000.

Several days later Zhao was released into hospital with her fourth, fifth and sixth vertebrae fractured, minor injuries to the head, and her left eye bruised and swollen. She died of her injuries several months later.

Since July of 1999, Falun Dafa practitioners outside of China have used every opportunity to let the world know about the crackdown, and Hayley indicated that the Victoria practitioners will continue to agitate for public support of a just cause.

"Throughout two years of unjust treatment practitioners have consistently followed the teachings of Falun Dafa, bearing no hatred or violence toward their oppressors and consistently demonstrating compassion and tolerance," she said. "Our goal is to ensure that the reputation of Falun Dafa is restored."

For more information about Falun Dafa, the Victoria practitioners will be holding two information sessions on Tuesday, August 7 and Thursday, August 16 from 7pm to 9pm in the Grad Lounge.

Beware the ninja

Kevin Groves takes time out from life to run away from scary people in black suits

by Kevin Groves

I have never been so sore in my life.

Sitting in the living room of my house, I look down at my legs and feel a faint throb pulsing through my muscles telling me I still have motor control, but beyond that there is little response. My body sentences me to spend the next few days walking stiff legged from point A to B, like a Texas cowboy who has spent too much time riding into the horizon.

But this is not the first time that an individual has sacrificed himself for his art, nor will it be the last. In my case that sacrifice comes with an experience that I will probably remember for the rest of my life: karate camp.

Over the last weekend I embarked on a two and a half-day trip up into the wilderness for an intensive martial arts training camp. Whenever I go somewhere that puts me into adversity I always feel homesick after a few days and wonder when I'll be able to go home, like the conditioned city dweller that I am.

In this case though, I wanted to stay; in fact, I lost track of the person I was when I left my house and forgot all my worldly cares completely.

photo by Chris Bogusz

A product of creative minds

For one of the few times in my life, I didn't care about money, school, relationships, or what's on tv. All that mattered was the training, the self-improvement, and the awareness that develops from it.

The experience will haunt me for a long time to come.

On the first night after setting up our tents the sound of a gong draws us towards the black belt hut. Sensei Chris welcomes us to the second annual karate camp and we accept the life tags, which for the next two days will be more important to us than spun gold.

The life tags are little pieces of velcro that you wear on your chest and back. They're there to give the camp ninja a target, and if the ninja is successful in taking away your tags, you become a 'hungry ghost,' or a spirit unable to talk or eat anything until you complete one of the trials listed on a scroll with a skull on the back. The names alone are enough to affect the faint at heart: The Tortured Mind, The Endless Roll, Hanshi's House of Pain.

The ninja can attack at any time. He attacks with the stealth of the highly trained and the force of someone who wants your life and will not compromise. You have two options in a ninja attack, common to all animals: fight or flight. If you choose the latter you have to run a few hundred meters up a steep hill that leads to a circle of stones in which you're safe. If you choose the former, well, only one person made that choice and it was over in under five seconds.

The ninja can also attack at night while you are asleep and your only protection from life tag removal is to make enough noise to let him know that you are aware of his presence. One way to do this is to put dry sticks or pine cones around your tent for him to step on so that you'll know someone's out there. Passers by on the first night would have stared at me hunched over on the side of the road with a plastic bag, scooping up pine cones, like a vacuum cleaner sucking up wayward dust bunnies.

I wouldn't do it unless it was for a good reason; I quickly learned to be afraid of the ninja. On the first night he attacked after dark and caught me completely off guard. I hear someone scream NINJA! and then the camp is vacated with the speed of the crazed fleeing a natural catastrophe. Then I see a figure in black coming towards me and instinct takes over: run away Kevin, now!

I charge up the hill like a scared rabbit and fall headlong into a ditch hard enough to rattle my teeth and send my flashlight flying. Reason leaves my body as I look behind and see the ninja with a hand outstretched toward my back. My lungs burn as I continue up the mountain and I fall two more times and then run into a tree hard enough to open a gash on my arm.

I collapse in a heap inside the circle and feel the blood drip down my forearm. Other students shine their lights on me and I ask weakly if my tag is still there. I am reassured that it is and I lie down, catch my breath and feel the adrenaline slowly draining from me like a vice grip gradually relaxing.

Later sensei Chris comes up to me with my flashlight and tells me that I ran well in the last attack. To me that is an understatement: I'd have run across Canada and back to get away from the ninja.

As the camp progresses we train hard for hours. I learn some jujitsu on the second day and am paired with a 200 pound white belt who crushes the wind out of me every time he's on top. We roll around on the ground like adolescent siblings and by the end of the session my once white gi is streaked with the grass and dirt stains that only come out with the strongest bleach.

Later we don our pads for hands and feet, and stand toe to toe with each other for sparring training. I remind myself that this is light sparring, meaning we have to pull our punches and avoid making contact, but accidents do happen. My partner charges at me and I jab lightly, making contact, and blood begins to stream from his nose in tiny droplets that also only come out with the strongest of bleach. Oops?

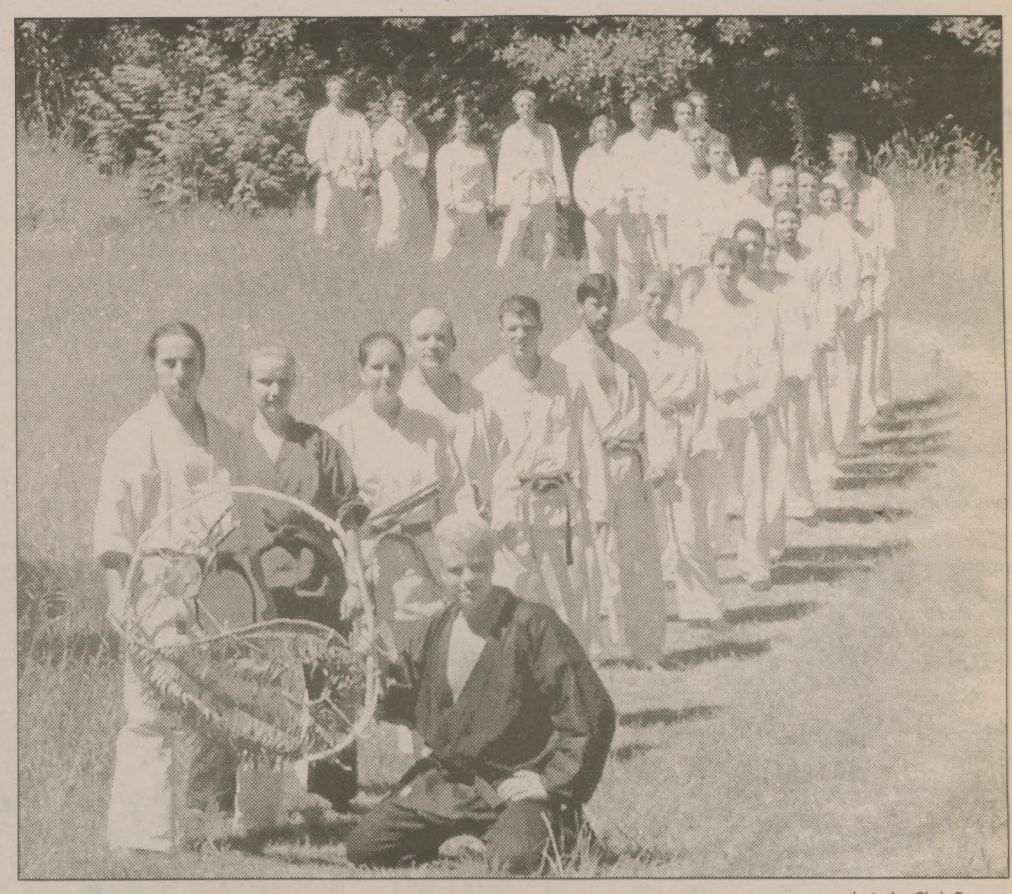


photo by Chris Bogusz

Lining up at the end of the camp for a group photo

The practice proves to be worth it though when nighttime hits on the second day and I line up with the rest of the students for the Mortal Kombat sparring tournament. The ring turns out to be a large square of four torches, surrouned by judges who have the daunting task of determining whether that punch you threw actually did connect enough to warrant a point.

I take my place on the line and stand opposite another student who has trained almost a year and a half longer than me. Sweat pours down my face as the fight begins and all other distractions become irrelevant.

I end up winning the match and take my seat in the 'still alive' group, safe in the knowledge that I can at least defend myself with marginal competence. When I'm called again, though, my opponent eliminates me in less than one minute. Spoke too soon I guess.

On the last day I wake up early for some morning Tai Chi training with sensei Chris. We take our positions on the morning field and perform the slow movements, feeling the peacefulness of being outside in the wilderness. The sun creeps over the horizon and I feel its fire blazing down on me in regular waves of solar energy.

I slowly breathe in and let the air escape my lungs gradually. Nothing else matters at this moment except the quiet thrill of being in this place with these people that I barely know yet whom I feel connected to through the unspoken bond of shared experience.

A few years back I read a book that presented an interesting theory about the nature of the universe, and it comes back to me at this moment. If you subscribe to the Big Bang theory, then everything in the universe originated from one source: that giant explosion that would make a 100 megaton nuclear blast seem like a child's party sparkler.

If this theory is true, then everything on earth and beyond had the same origin, whether human made or not since nothing can come from nothing. In some small way then you have the same substance within you as that dog that just walked by, the Pentium processor in your computer, or the stars that shine in the night sky. There is no reason to feel cut off from anything in this world, which seems to be a trend in our post-yuppie, consumer society, since on a molecular level we're all connected.

As we finish the Tai Chi training and line up for the camp photo, I feel a heightened awareness as though my limited consciousness had just been expanded beyond its recognizable boundaries, like a balloon inflated with air. There is little talk about what we did at the camp as cars begin to pull away, there's no need to: everyone who was there feels more aware of themselves, and there's no need to express it.

As I sit in my living room, I contemplate what I experienced over the last weekend and feel more at peace than I did before, like an internal wake up call telling me that my problems really aren't that bad.

If one weekend of camp can accomplish this, then being sore is worth it.

photo by Chris Bogusz

A student board break at the camp promotion

STUDENT VOICE

Canadian Democracy or the lack thereof

by Rana Phagurra

During a television interview, as the most recent B.C. provincial election results came in, former B.C. Premier William Vanderzalm noted that the news media had given little coverage of the Unity Party. He speculated that if they had, the Unity Party might have split the right-wing vote with the Liberals. Vanderzalm surmised the news media chose to portray the Green Party as a serious contender for the role of official opposition, in order to split the left-vote between the Greens and the incumbent New Democrats.

Given the recent tax cuts announced by the B.C. Liberals, it would seem the corporate news media had a very substantial incentive to play the role of kingmaker in the recent provincial election. These tax cuts will probably start a tax-cut bidding war, with provinces seeking to lure investment by competing as to which can offer the lowest tax rates. Such a war will mean increased fiscal pressure for cuts in state expenditure on social and public services, especially if the economy plunges into recession. The tax cuts will benefit big corporations, first and foremost, at the expense of the public sector. The result will be the erosion of the social safety net across Canada.

The ruling elite has embarked on a very dangerous course. Our national fiscal policy, and our dominant political and social culture, is beginning to resemble that of the United States. Once our fiscal policy objectives are in sync with theirs, it will no longer make sense for Canada to pursue a monetary policy different from the one set out by the Federal Reserve in the United States. The logical conclusion will be the adoption of the U.S. dollar by Canada, followed by integration with the U.S.

Canada has the world's largest supply of fresh water. We are an energy rich nation. Our population density is low in comparison to the U.S. Canada is in a much better position to take care of her citizens than the U.S. However, this is about to change. Our country is about to be plundered. With the assault on public services serving as ground zero, the same social injustice and inequality that pervades American society is about to be duplicated here. Race politics and class wars will now replace Trudeau's Canada. Voices of opposition will be silenced or marginalized.

> Canada is in a much better position to take care of her citizens than the US. However, this is about to change. Our country is about to be plundered.

Don't believe the polls. The corporate news media is now engaged in a campaign to Americanize Canada. They want to create a country where only the rich will be able to afford quality education, health care, and other services that Canadians had previously enjoyed as publicly funded services. This will be done, because the ruling class in America wants our country. They will have it. Canadian politicians such as Brian Mulroney, Paul Martin, Joe Clark, Gordon Campbell and others have sold us out. In my opinion, these people are the Canadian equivalent of Benedict Arnold.

LETTERS

Hospitality workers ask for an enforced smoking ban

Some pubs are asking for yet ANOTHER delay in the WCB's ban. I must say, the hypocrisy stinks. Thirty-seven workplace deaths occur every year in BC from secondhand smoke poisoning and we hear "delay the ban." As an ex-hospitality worker, it is no wonder I often feel like axe murderers get more care and concern.

Hospitality workers deserve equal treatment and the same protection which all other workers receive. Since April 1998, a smoking ban has been in effect in every other BC workplace. The pubs have ALREADY had their "delay" to get with it and build a smoking room. What do they need, fifty years?

Ventilation can't possibly solve the problem for one simple reason. Smoke must go from the end of the burning cigarette to the ventilation system. On its way, workers are unavoidably exposed to secondhand smoke's 40+ carcinogens. "Ventilation solution" is a polite euphemism for "let the poisoning continue."

And anyone who says that a ban is anti-smoker has got it wrong. Work-place smoking bans are no more "anti-smoker" than drunk-driving laws are "anti-drinker." Both are simply aimed at injury and death prevention.

Previously-secret tobacco industry documents show that the industry fights smoking bans, tooth-and-nail. Their modus operandi is to get others, like the pubs, to do the fighting (sound familiar?). One document contains the reason:

"Smoking bans are the biggest challenge we have ever faced. Quit rate goes from 5 per cent to 21 per cent when smokers work in non-smoking environments."

I think we have the real reason behind the opposition to the WCB ban. There is a dirty war going on with worker and public health being sacrificed at the altar of tobacco industry profits. In a civilized society, it is time that hospitality workers receive protection from this proven cause of disease, misery and death.

Heather Mackenzie

Credit unions key factor in development

The appointment of former MP Jack Whittaker of Osoyoos as VP of Credit Union Central of B.C. could assist Credit Unions to again fill a void in B.C. communities.

The credit union was born out of harsh social and economic conditions during the Industrial Revolution. Unevenly distributed wealth meant the majority of people did not have access to financing needed to start businesses or buy products and services in order to improve social conditions. The Credit Union idea and model offered a 'way out' for decent hard working members of the community. Today, society faces a revolution that is just as significant. The shift to a rapidly changing, knowledge driven, open economy and marketplace, is changing the investment flow and liquidity concentrating wealth. Free and unrestricted movement of capital, mutual funds, with local shops on main street, online banking are fueling the flow of available money into the stock and bond market, inflating a financial balloon with no foundation in the underlying economy. The banks directed their initiatives toward wealth management, personal, and consumer lending and away from business, and Credit Unions followed. Not much investment finds its way back to small and mid-sized business facing increasing difficulties attracting equity investment and obtaining financing. Unsolved it will continue to hamper economic production, jobs, self-reliance and quality of life in many communities, and foster dependency of government and tax transfers under the banner of worthy causes as community development, but not viable in open economic conditions, – a vicious circle critical for British Columbia to break.

As in the 19th century, the Credit Union could again be a key factor in local and regional development. With the right methods and systems, not all but some of the investment in Nortel and others could have been better invested and managed if it had been injected into many small and midsize companies. I am certain Jack Whittaker will use his expertise and experience to encourage Credit Unions to adapt to the new open economic and market conditions, and to again fill the void in our communities by creating and distributing liquidity where needed.

Kell Petersen

Victoria woman to represent Canada's First Nations at UN

My name is Rose Henry. While I was speaking out at the anti-racism rally this past March my name had been put forward to the United Nations to attend the World Conference on Anti-Racism. This year the UN is holding it in Durban, South Africa on Aug. 28/01 until Sept. 8/01. As far as I know I am the only one that is going to the conference from Victoria and one of even fewer group of First Nations people going to this conference from Canada. This honour has bestowed upon me only because I have found the courage and the will to share my story and experience of racism and poverty.

> When the oppression got to be too much for me I decided to try and do something about it. So far it has gotten me out of my shell and speaking out...

To give everyone a little history of my back ground; I came to Victoria seventeen years ago as a single parent with the idea that I was going to be attending college and get a certificate as a child care worker. Then I would go off to University and become a Social Worker. Well, after 18 months of college I quit and became a Home Support Worker. I had learned that segregation and discrimination was alive and well-off these 17 years I have worked on changing our so called Social Justice movement so that there is some justice for all people no matter who they are.

I am part of the Salish Nation (coastal) my mother is from Sliammon (Powell River), my late father was from Squirrel Cove. Back in 1993 I married a man frm the Snuneymuxm Nation. For the past 17 years I have learned to speak out about things that are destroying people and their ability to be at one with themselves.

After having personally witnessed other people being denied adequate services in addition to experiencing it myself. When the oppression got to be too much for me I decided to try and do something about it. So far is has gotten me out of my shell and speaking out, I have been on the Ministry of Income Assistance Advisory Council (2 years), the Victoria Native Friendship Center board (5 years), on the board at Together Against Poverty Society (8 years) and worked in a MLA's constituents office for about two years.

I have also learned that I am just one of a few people going to this conference and that I am also one of the fewer First Nations people going from Canada. It is at this time I would like to send an acknoledgment to my dear friend Elizabeth Carron (T.A.P.S.) and David Turner (V.I.H.R.C.) for honouring me with this incredible journey. I know that it will be a learning one for everyone.

URGENT Right now I am needing yours and the communities help to cover the cost of this incredible trip. You can send your donations to the Vancouver Human Rights Coalition at Room # 418-620 View Street, Victoria, B.C., V8W 1J6, Telphone # 382-3012 (Sorry there is no tax receipt available, we're not rich enough for one.) If anyone would like to donate items for future raffle it would be gratefully appreciated. You can send them or drop them at the T.A.P.S. and or the V.I.H.R.C. Monday to Friday 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

My goal is to raise $5,000 by the middle of July 2001. The money raised will cover the cost of my plane fare, food, hotel, transportation and other additional expenses like a passport and cost of printing these letters etc. I will be selling my anti-poverty t-shirts as another fundraiser.

If people want to get in touch with me they can e-mail at vihrc@victoria.tc.ca or the can fax me at Together Aghainst Poverty (250) 360-2541.

looking for something
to do this summer?
why not come help out
at *the Martlet*?
we're in SUB B011, and
we have windows, so
you can at least
see the sunshine...

Mixed Media Mix at the Pandora Art Space

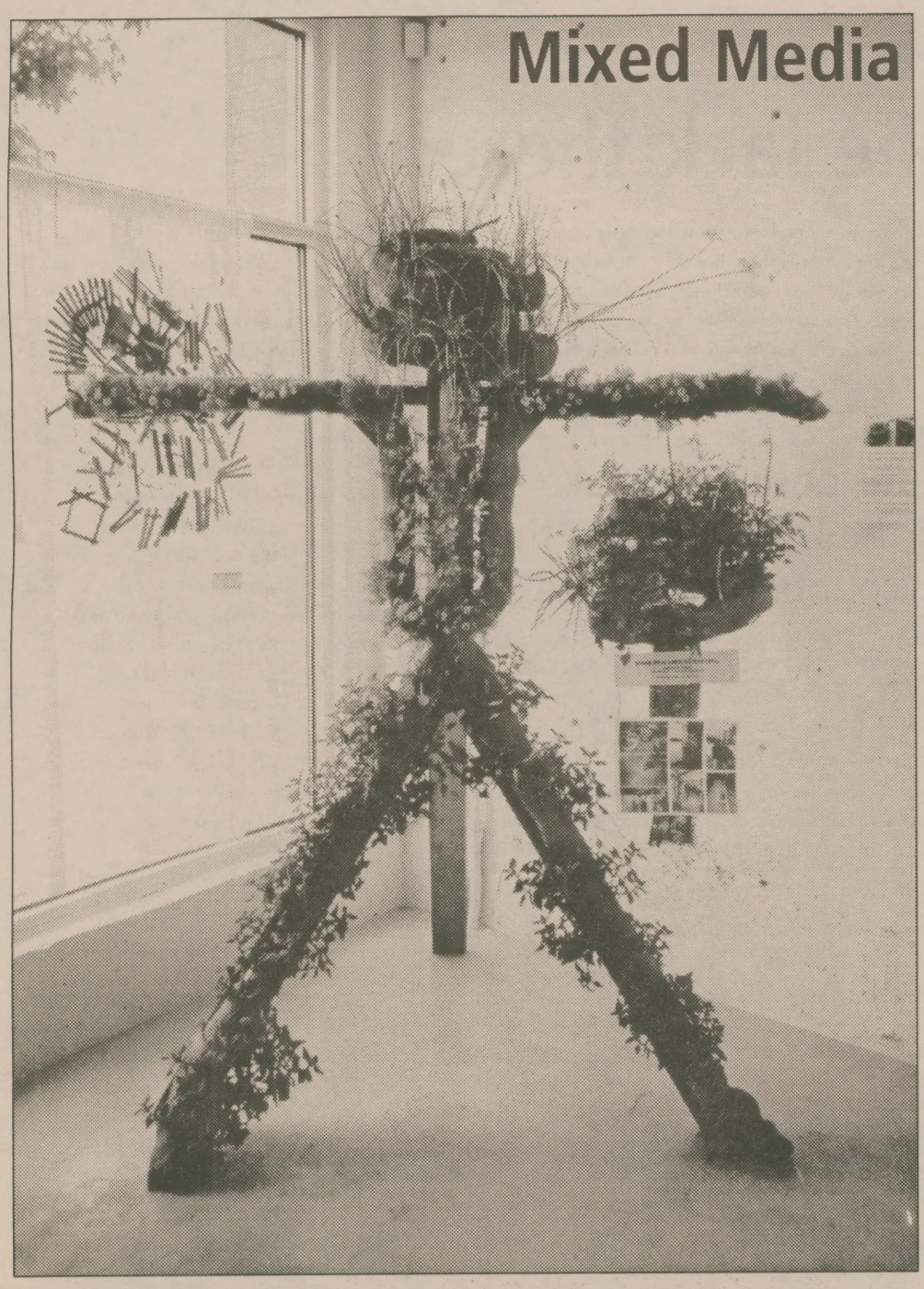


photo by Bessie Chow

The Edible Salad Man as seen at the Pandora Art Space

by Bessie Chow

The dry season is upon us, and as severe water shortages bleach yellow the usually vibrant City of Gardens, a local art gallery offers a refreshing splash of colour with its exciting new mixed media show.

There is even a cool paper maché penguin to greet you at the door as you enter the bright, energetic studio and gallery of the Pandora Art Space, located between Douglas and Blanshard. In a new exhibition entitled "Mixed Media Mix," the Space presents an exciting potpourri of artwork by both professional and amateur community artists. Works in the show are a combination of such varied and unusual items as broken floppies, cds, stuffed toys and spinach with more traditional mediums of paint, crayon, clay and pastels.

"Each piece [in mixed media] often involves some significance or meaning which the artist then incorporates into one piece," explained Lisa Bernstein, Art Therapist and Program Coordinator at the Space, as she settled down after jumping on a table to save a piece of work that had accidentally been knocked loose from one of its hangings on the high ceiling.

The exhibition, which began on July 4 and will continue until July 21, was put together in response to a number of mixed media artists inquiring about an opportunity to showcase their work.

"I just got interested in the things I saw on the side of the road," answered Adam Spiller, a local artist and show contributor, when asked how he got involved in mixed media. "I started collecting stuff, and then, when I was working on a project, I was like 'I have the perfect piece for that here,'" indicating a knickknack resembling a can opener that he had included in one of his works.

Glancing around at the assortment of brightly coloured porcelain, popsicle sticks and beach pebbles, there is an undeniable creative energy pulsating in the air of the fun and friendly studio, which first opened in September 2000 with funding from the Capital Health Region and the B.C. School of Art Therapy.

"The purpose of the Space is to provide an integrated setting for artists from all walks, and assistance in doing and selling artwork in a professional direction," says Bernstein, the only staff member at the gallery, which is run primarily by participants who exchange services for studio time. The Space is an open studio for participants in mental health programs as well as individuals from other community groups.

Among the showcased works is a peculiar seven-foot male figure adorned with various vegetables, affectionately referred to as the "Edible Salad Man" by other Space participants. The Edible Salad Man is part of a project by Michael Corban, who is on a research grant to develop an economical method to grow food to market in the Third World. The technique involves the use of bio-ropes, handcrafted strips of jute and coconut fibre, which allows the year-round harvesting of various salad greens, vegetables, and fruits with minimal use of water. Now, there is something H20-starved Victorian gardeners can use!

The studio is located at 749 Pandora, with gallery hours Monday and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., Fridays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

ProArt looks forward to changes

by Kevin Groves

Arts organizations in the Capital Region can expect to have better representation this year from the ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria with the appointment of two new co-chairs earlier this month.

On Friday, July 6, Janice O'Brian, general manager of the Kaleidoscope Theatre Society, and Pierre Arpin Director of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, were named to replace outgoing chair Mary Desprez as the new co-chairs of ProArt. Arpin and O'Brian will begin their duties immediately.

"Janet and Pierre are a good mix and I think they'll do well together" said Dierdre Ross, coordinator of ProArt. "Kaleidoscope has a much smaller budget than the art gallery, so groups from both sides of the financial spectrum should feel more represented by us."

Founded in 1983 and incorporated in 1997, ProArt seeks to have the value of the arts industry in Greater Victoria recognized. It acts as an umbrella organization for 12 local arts groups, including the Belfry Theatre and the Rogue Art Society, promotes the sharing of information, and addresses relevant issues facing the cultural community of Greater Victoria.

"We continue to show the public that the arts are good for the city we live in," Arpin said. "As the economy continues to diversify, we create and sustain jobs."

During the 15 years of the Society's existence, member organizations have worked together to address industry issues and common concerns, and to engage in joint initiatives and programs.

"We ensure that our member organizations have adequate communications and a united front on issues that affect the arts community as a whole," Arpin said.

In the last year ProArt's executive was successful in securing an additional $1.25 million in funding over the next five years from the four core cities of Victoria, Colwood, Saanich and Esquimalt. Prior to that, arts funding in the Capital Region totaled $590,000.

"The previous executive accomplished some amazing things," O'Brain said. "What we'd been working toward for the last few years was a cumulative increase in funding of 30 per cent per year and we've seen some positive response. By 2004, we're hoping to receive about $1.8 million per year from the four core."

In spite of these positive changes, Ross indicated that there is no guarantee the funding will continue, and one of the main challenges the new chairs will face is to ensure greater public awareness of the benefits the arts are responsible for in Victoria.

"Even with the increase, we're still below 1per cent of the municipal budget," Ross said. "We've received the first $250,000 this year, but if politicians feel there is a public demand for the arts, then, and only then, they will keep funding it, so we must maintain public awareness."

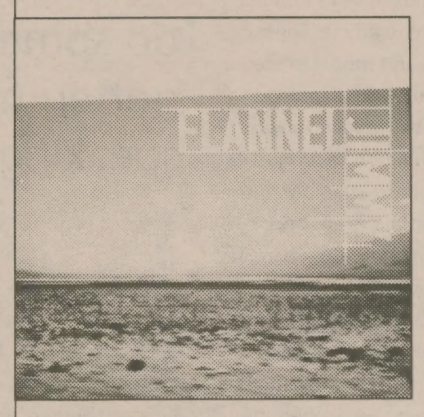
One way the new chairs will attempt to accomplish this goal is to set up a committee of local business leaders who will represent the arts community in the business community.

"We're moving toward a new committee structure, and we're trying to make ProArt more representative," O'Brian said. "We have advocates outside of the arts community and feel that this new committee will give them an opportunity to contribute more."

A recent study undertaken by the Intermunicipal Committee of Greater Victoria (IMC), a group of municipalities working together to fund the arts, indicated that if the arts were properly funded, the direct economic impact on Greater Victoria would be $72.2 million and 1,500 new jobs would be created.

Currently, the cultural industries in B.C. employ more people than the logging industry and the employment numbers are growing at twice the pace of the general labour market.

CD REVIEWS



Flannel Jimmy
Flannel Jimmy
2001 Nettwerk Productions

Jimmy to rock the Square

by Dixon McGowan

I heard the new Flannel Jimmy cd and I think it rocks. Flannel Jimmy is a band out of Nanaimo. They've recorded in a number of different places including Hornby Island. I like the front cover of the cd and the picture of the band. I think track one rocks and track two but I think the whole cd rocks anyway. They're playing at Centennial Square at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 22 in the Concerts Under the Stars. The show will be broadcast live on the Q.
So be there or be square.

Blue Again is something to be happy about

Karin Plato
Blue Again
2000 Stikjazz Music

by Jason Gondziola

If cds could radiate heat, this collection of duets would emanate a warm, maternal glow. The lazy lilt of Karin Plato's voice will lull you into a womb-like infantile state, your lips sucking contentedly on the nourishing globe of mother's teet.

This transplanted prairie girl's third album is a compilation of easy-listening jazz duets, coupling her sultry voice with the masterful stylings of some of Vancouver's finest musicians. Rich guitar melodies are provided by Bill Coon and Celso Machado, while Oliver Gannon and Torben Oxbol waltz the bassline into the tracks. Plato's technical prowess and the astounding quality of the musicians who have accompanied her on this album will please the ears of afficianados and laypeople alike.

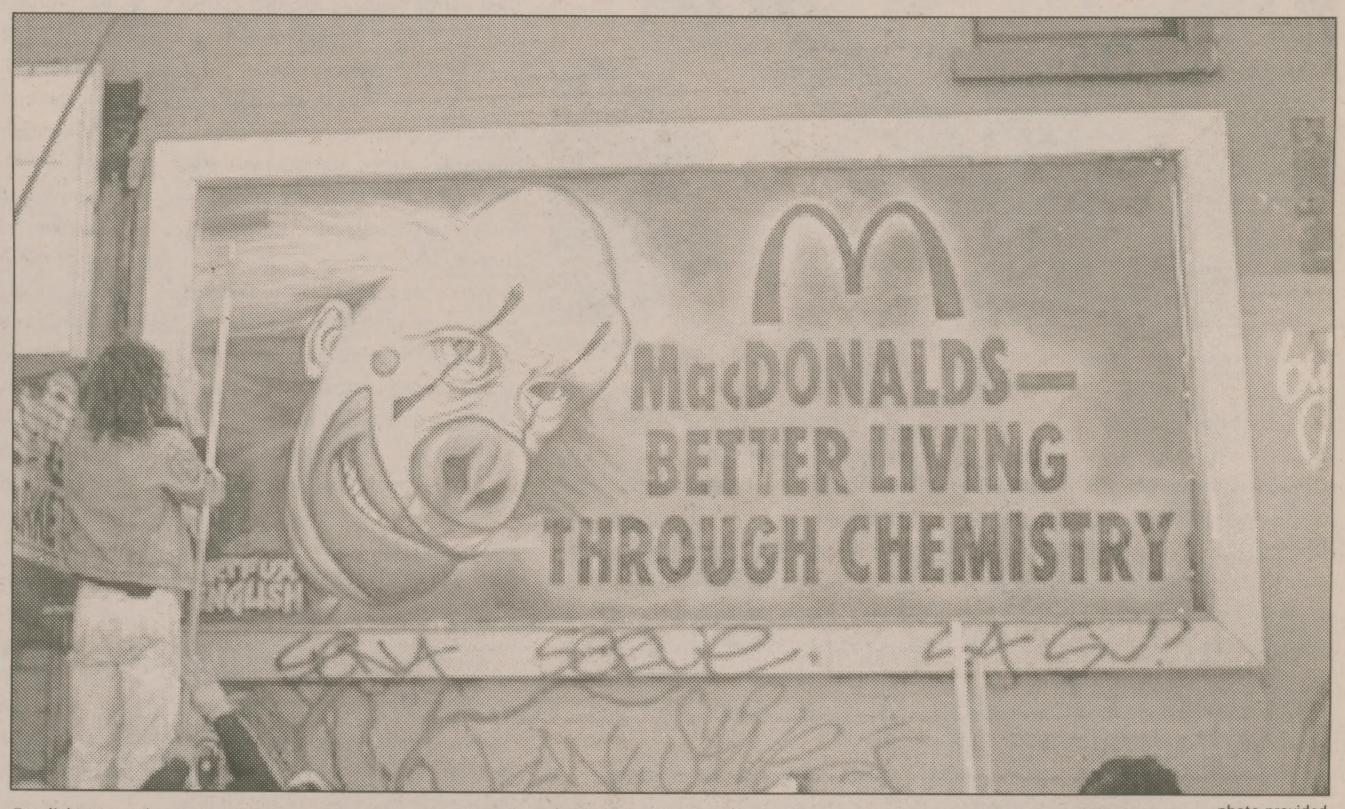
Songs range from Irving Berlin to Rodgers and Hammerstein, and each tune is given the unique feel that Plato brings. In addition to the ecclectic collection of jazz tunes, *Blue Again* contains two of Plato's own songs, including the title track.

All in all, this compilation of mellow melodies is a welcome addition to any jazz collection.

Living Large:

The story of a culture-jammer

Writer Layla Bloom with artist Ron English. photo provided



English at work. photo provided

by Layla Bloom

In the window of the austere Soho Opera Gallery in New York City, "Marilyn with Mickey Mounds" (2001), from Ron English's latest exhibit, "Bipolar Surrealism," stops passersby in their tracks. A hyper-coloured Marilyn Munroe seductively thrusts her Mickey Mouse-faced breasts into the street, demanding the viewer's attention. This jarring juxtaposition of well-known images is clearly a challenge to popular culture. It speaks of the seduction of children by corporations, the deification of famous figures, the constructed nature of media images, even the notion of art itself. This is culture-jamming.

Another arresting painting at Bipolar Surrealism, "Homer's Cartoon Coloured Creationism" (2001), places the viewer underneath a terrifying Homer Simpson spattering paint à la Jackson Pollack over his canvas, which seems to be us. My personal favourite, though, is "Times Square" (2001), a revision of Picasso's "Guernica" set with mangled popular toys and corporate logos.

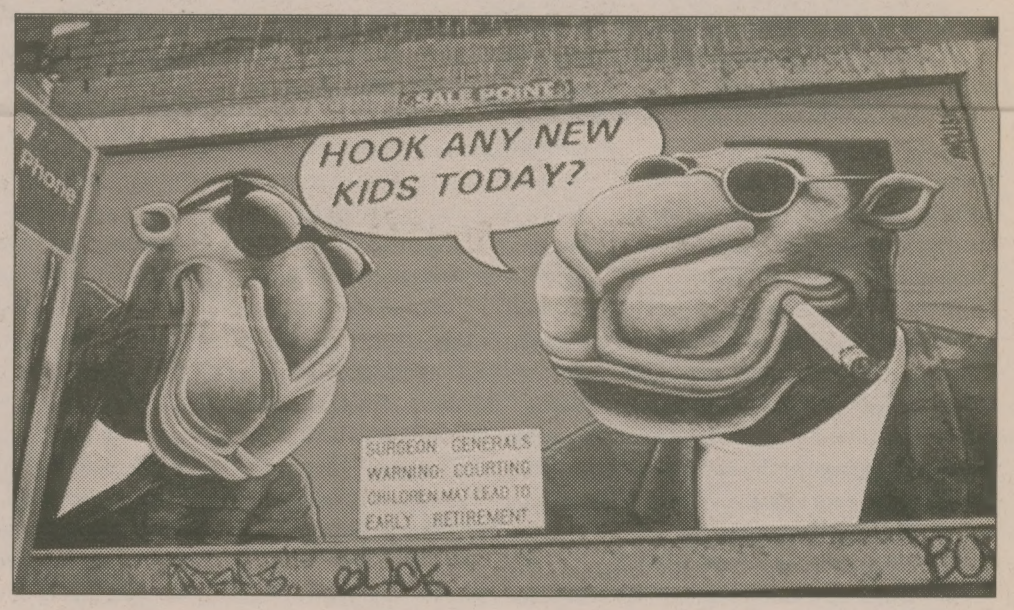
Most of Ron English's paintings are peopled with familiar cartoon and pop figures. Though eccentric, they are an aesthetic pleasure: beautifully coloured and realistically rendered, but too weird to be beautiful. Further inspection reveals the dark humour and social satire of his pieces. Contemplating their meaning is more interesting than examining their pleasing exterior. English asserts that his paintings are "all about the idea." He is more interested in critiquing society than simply painting it. In his view, he is not a mere pop artist, who simply reflects popular culture, because he is "passionately engaged" in it. Pop iconography is simply the logical medium to express his opinions. "I look out my window and I don't see a mountain, I see an advertisement. I am surrounded by the cartoon mascots of the corporations that rule the planet."

"The way I have come to terms with them is by making them my own through the process of art," he writes in his new book *Popaganda: The Art and Subversion of Ron English, 2001*.

Ron English has been encouraging people to see the world around them differently since the beginning of his artistic career. As a photography student, English enjoyed creating skewed-perspective photographs. He would paint elaborately realistic cardboard figures and set them amongst real models, producing surreal-looking images. Living in Dallas in the early 80s, English first began using billboards as props for his photography, often leaving his artwork behind. Other young Dallas artists saw the possibilities of using billboards as a free showcase for their talent, and the trend grew.

English's incursion into billboard-painting sprouted in part, he admits, from his desire as a young artist to promote his work. But cultural subversion has always been an element. English and a group of like-minded friends formed the New Urban Aesthetics Committee, assembling regularly for billboard repainting/keg party events across Texas. In 1984, English and his friends were convicted of second-degree felonies for their outlaw art. But English wears his criminal record like a badge of honour. He feels that having faced the consequences and carried on has legitimized him in the culture-jamming movement. Sure enough, only a few hours out of jail, English was back up on a scaffold, altering another billboard.

Though his early art billboards displayed some social commentary, his direct attacks on the advertising medium developed over the course of his career. From colourful surreal paintings, English went on to use billboards to voice his opinions about politics, religion and corporations in subversive advertising, or "subvertisements." His hope is that his billboards will "outrage the complacent sensibilities of the viewer" or at least "temporarily sidetrack the thought continuum, sending it off into an unexpected direction, if only for a moment." English's billboard paintings have been an inspiration to many other artists and billboard "liberation" has blossomed into an international phenomenon.



English's subvertisement of a Camel cigarette ad. photo provided

Today, English is considered, along with such groups as the San Francisco Billboard Liberation Front, as one of the founders of the culture-jamming movement. Don Goede, his publisher, has labelled him "America's Favourite Culture-Jammer." English has certainly earned his titles; he claims to have liberated thousands of billboards in the last two decades. As to the illegality of his actions, he explains that billboard liberation is a moral issue. In an unequally wealthy society, where the rich person "gets to sell cigarettes to my children because he owns the billboard," someone has to respond, says the father of two. "I'm not a criminal for covering up a cigarette ad," he asserts, "They're criminal for putting one up."

> I'm not a criminal for covering up a cigarette ad, they're criminal for putting one up.
>
> *Ron English*

Nowadays, English's life is more subdued. After moving to New York in 1986, he began painting on the more traditional canvas. "I definitely learned to paint by doing the billboards. After years of painting things at that scale, canvasses were a piece of cake," he told an interviewer in 1998. His canvasses certainly do a better job of paying the bills. Paintings from "Bipolar Surrealism" were selling from $2,500 to $30,000 US. English, however, has not forgotten his less wealthy fans. Because he comes from a working-class background, he feels the need to give something back to the public for free. He worries that many people have lost touch with art because they are "too hyper-aware of the money" involved. By replacing billboards with art or subvertisements, English aims to destroy this concept of art as a commodity; he terms it "sacrificing it to the altar of the moment." By their illegal nature, subvertisement billboards cannot be owned and they cannot survive, existing as "finite moments consumed in a quick glance." Billboard liberation is also a way for him to let off creative steam between canvasses. "You think differently, you think big, fast; you can be so crazy, and it doesn't even matter: it won't even exist next week," he explains.

Even if his fervour for liberating billboards has cooled somewhat, he has certainly not slowed down creatively. In recent years he has branched out into music, collaborating with musicians like Tripping Daisy and Wesley Willis, and extensively with friend Daniel Johnston, to create music based on his art and ideas.

For his next painting, English is considering another variation on the Guernica composition, from an aerial viewpoint, perhaps with his son flying overhead in a bomber. A friend and fellow billboard-liberator, Pedro Carvajal, informed me that he and English have just liberated a billboard in Jersey City.

The pair will be interviewed for an independent documentary in English's studio sometime mid-July. Whatever Ron English is involved with in the future, it is sure to be innovative. "I like to try new stuff all the time."

Check out Ron English's art at www.popaganda.com.

A concert with "Headzone:" Radiohead in Vancouver

photo provided

Thom Yorke woos his audience.

by John Thompson

A couple Sundays ago I romped over to Thunderbird Stadium to catch Radiohead's first plunge into Canada in over four years. It was an incredible show, but a couple things had me pretty confused.

In the interest of journalistic disclosure, I must say that drugs had something to do with it. After listening to their new album *Amnesiac*, gobbling psilocybic magic mushrooms prior to the show seemed like the only sensible option.

But what really confused me wasn't the doors of perception being ripped off their hinges. No, it was a security fence barring entry to a great semicircle surrounding the stage. A sinister fence, guarded by sinister-looking security personnel, with their arms crossed, heads shaved, and wrap-around sunglasses glinting in the afternoon sun.

This was the "Headzone." Headzoners got a nice roomy area right in front of the stage, while we, the beheaded masses, were left asking ourselves why we felt so short. I think we must have been facing uphill, since the stage was hard to see beyond a mass of heads and shoulders. Behind me, an extremely large Radiohead fan asked, "Where's the dwarf section?" I think we were all wondering the same thing.

It's true, Radiohead espouses anti-globalist politics, but this wasn't exactly what I had in mind. Promoting Naomi Klein's *No Logo* from the stage is one thing. Constructing a perimeter fence inside of the concert is another. Initially, this distraction was hard to ignore, as I felt like I'd been swept back to Quebec during the Summit of the Americas, albeit with far better music playing. And the music was fantastic.

Since being launched into the commercial stratosphere with their hit album *Ok Computer*, Radiohead has avoided the brightness of the media spotlight by hiding in their studio for several years, creating strange drones, blips and drum loops. The end product was *Kid A* and *Amnesiac*, two albums released eight months apart, but recorded during the same session. While criticized by some as recycled Aphex Twin, their new direction integrates all that electronic stuff far more deeply than most established bands would dare. Then again, they are from Britannia, where no matter how far you twist the radio dial, you'll have difficulty escaping music somehow infected by Techno.

And you know what? They can really pull it off live. They came in blazing "The National Anthem," bringing the crowd to life with its infectious bass line, and plenty of blinky lights to boot, filling the stadium air with electricity like an area about to be hit by a thunderstorm.

When they performed "Idioteque," Thom York was hopping around the stage to the infectious drumbeats, comically shouting "Yo! Fuck. Yeah." This seems to capture the mood of their performance: energetic, upbeat, and not without a touch of humour.

"I Might Be Wrong," was introduced by Thom, "This is a song about being lost in the mountains... obviously." Again, the catchy beats, this time accompanied by bluesy, bad–ass guitar riffs and Thom's softly sung vocals.

As for the security fence, I wanted to organize a rebellion, but I couldn't be sure the whole thing wasn't some drug–induced misunderstanding. There were several attempts to catch Thom's attention between songs, for surely he'd help. "Hey! Thom! Can we come inside?" shouted a nearby fan. We all hollered in unison, but to no avail. "Kill the fence!" I cried out. And while others nearby told me they supported the cause, no clear plan of action was devised, except a bit of pushing that got us nowhere.

As a golden sun floated behind the Douglas Firs framing the stage, with the band lit by iridescent blue lights, Thom crooned through the string-filled, eerily beautiful "How to Disappear Completely." And I'm pretty bloody sure moments like this were magical, with or without psychoactive assistance. My friend said people would cry at this concert, and during moments like that, I had little doubt.

The band did also play "Nude" (or, "Don't Get Any Big Ideas"), an unreleased crowd favourite. In all, their set was over two hours long, and went out with a bang, with the band ending their second encore by playing "Karma Police."

As the stadium lights came on, signaling that the gig really was truly over, we slowly filed out of the stadium. As we did, several girls blew bubbles from the stairs above us which twinkled shiny mirrors and rainbows before popping. It was a fitting end to an ethereal concert, but next time we really ought to kill that fence.

A.I. Artificial Intelligence: Colliding Visions

by Stefanie de Villiers

The idea is first proposed in a room full of aspiring students: "Let's create a robot that can love," proclaims Dr. Hobby (William Hurt). And with that begins the haunting tale of David (Joel Haley Osment) a perfectly humanoid six-year-old programmed to unconditionally love his "mother," Monica (Frances O'Connor).

When Monica's biological son unexpectedly recovers from a mysterious disease and returns home, a kind of sibling rivalry develops between boy and robo-boy. David's position within the family becomes increasingly precarious until, following a series of misunderstandings, David is abandoned by the mother he is programmed to love forever. From that point on, the movie consists of David's obsessive quest to regain the love of his lost mother.

Accompanied by Teddy (a supertoy) and Gigolo Joe (an excellent Jude Law), David desperately seeks the blue fairy of *Pinocchio* fame, believing that once he is a real boy, Monica will take him back and love him forever. The parallels with Pinocchio are obvious.

One can imagine the appeal of a boy whose near-maniacal one-mindedness is not far removed from Kubrick's own.

Based on Brian Aldiss' short story *Supertoys Last All Summer Long*, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* bears the undeniable mark of both its creators: Stephen Spielberg (director) and the late Stanley Kubrick (reportedly he spent ten years planning this movie, passing away before he had the chance to make it). As I watched the sets, it was impossible not to be reminded of Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange* and *2001: Space Odyssey*. From David's futuristic bed to the visions of an ice-covered Manhattan, and the concluding scene, which I won't divulge, Kubrick's obsessive eye hovers over the entire project. One can imagine the appeal of a boy whose near-maniacal one-mindedness is not far removed from Kubrick's own. And yet, Spielberg's presence is just as strong. The boy-dreamer who travels the world in search of a fairy tale belongs as much to Spielberg as Kubrick.

In *A.I*, Spielberg and Kubrick's styles collide, apocalyptic nihilism on one side, child-like yearning and optimism on the other. And in the end it's unclear who wins. The movie has attracted some criticism for Spielberg's apparent inability to marry his vision (which seems to be inherently optimistic) with Kubrick's darker side (the title of *Monday Magazine*'s review "Opposites distract" says all). I'm not sure Spielberg could (or should) have done anything different. Part of the movie's eerie strength lies precisely in its refusal to embrace one vision over the other. That the audience is never sure whether to empathise with the main character or feel repulsed by his "humanity" is, in my opinion, part of the film's unsettling force.

Whether the film is flawed or not, it raises a number of important questions about the nature of modern and future society. It explores our moral obligations in a world rapidly approaching the age of human cloning and designer children. More importantly, it examines the very meaning of being human, challenging some our most basic assumptions – our belief in the superiority of the human species, and our faith in the uniqueness of the individual.

In my opinion, *A.I.* is ahead of its time in the subjects it breeches and the challenges it exposes. It is also a timely indication of things to come. I can't help thinking that in future years this movie will take on a whole different meaning. Who knows? What I find disturbing in the year 2001 (such as the threat human cloning poses to our concept of the individual) might already be old news in 2030. This thought is perhaps the most unsettling of all.

BILLBOARDS

ON CAMPUS

The McPherson Library Gallery is exhibiting *Liquid Bodies and Soft Bellies* by Vancouver artist and UVic alumnus Laurel Terlesky from Aug 12 to Sept 27.

At the Maltwood Gallery *Visual Transistion* begins August 23. Twelve Mexican artists in B.C. The Maltwood is open Mon. - Fri. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bike Lockers available: See SUB General Info Booth for rental at summer rates. More bicycle info at http://web.uvic.ca/uvbikes

OFF CAMPUS

Fern Fest Community Celebration 2001. You're invited to this annual community celebration on Sat. August 18 at the Fernwood Community Centre (1240 Gladstone Ave.) and Stevenson Park. Live entertainment, children's activities, games and prizes, a corn roast, craft fair, community information booths and much more. The fun goes from noon to 4 p.m. For more info call 381-1552.

Buddhist Teachings and Empowerment, Vajrayana Nyingma tradition by lineage holder Gangteng Tulku Rinpoche. July 21, 22 and July 28, 29. Sandman Hotel, 2852 Douglas St. Donations: July 21 $30; July 22, 28, 29 $60/day. Discount for full attendance. Info/times: 595-8480/474-6254.

The Moss Street Market is enjoying another season of organic produce and herbs, organic baked goods, crafts and a variety of interesting creations. Drop by Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to see what the market has to offer this year. The market is located at Sir James Douglas School, Thurlow + Fairfield.

The 14th annual (and 1st annual vehicle-free) Moss Street Paint-In is this Saturday, July 21. Artists paint in on Moss St. 1 to 4 p.m. At the Art Gallery of Greater Vancouver: outdoor Latin Dance with Kumbia 5 - 9 p.m. Pizza/BBQ and Beverage Garden 12 - 8 p.m.

Western Canada Wilderness Committee presents *Save the Seas* Community Forum, July 25 from 7 - 9 p.m. Speakers will discuss strategies and threats to marine protected areas and the lifting of the offshore oil and gas moratorium. Slide show on marine species and ecosystems, up-to-date account on the new Race Rocks Marine Park. Garry Oak Room, Fairfield Community Place, 1335 Thurlow Rd. Call 388-9292 for more information.

FOR SALE

Funky reliable 1984 SAAB 900. Red. Four door. With roof rack. Will get you through university. $3000. Teresa: 381-0465

VOLUNTEERS

People needed to help set up an independent media presence in Victoria. Call Krisztina at 721-8629 for details. Or join our meetings at the Thin Edge every Sunday at 6 p.m.

HEY YOU!

You sleep in a nylon shelter by night and paddle the sea by day. You are a princess of the wilderness. And so is your prince.

Mabel with the deep dark eyes... would you please stop biting me? c

Next time i find you immature yapping little beast in my bed, i won't be so nice about it. Just cause it's called a 'dog bed' doesn't mean it's for all dogs! corbin

To the mystery person who keeps filling out cool suggestions in the office box (you know who you are): we should hook up, and fight the evil corporate world together.